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Dr. G. H. Miller, the author of "The Impact of Passive Smoking: Cancer Deaths among Nonsmoking Women" requested that a revised Abstract be printed to clarify several points.

ABSTRACT

In order to obtain an estimate of the impact of passive smoking on cancer mortality, a retrospective study was conducted examining the cancer mortality of nonsmoking wives with no known or minimal exposure in contrast to nonsmoking wives with moderate to life-time exposure to tobacco smoke. The study was based on the data from 906 deceased nonsmoking women who resided in Erie County, Pennsylvania, who were divided into the following three categories:

1. No known exposure
2. Exposed nonemployed
3. Employed (assumed to be exposed to environmental tobacco smoke in the workplace)

The data were analyzed by the retrospective case-control method using cancer deaths as the cases and non-cancer related deaths as the controls. Also, the data from 401 smoking women were used for comparative purposes of the total percentage of cancer deaths among three groups:

1. Nonsmoking, nonexposed women
2. Combined nonsmoking unemployed and employed exposed women
3. Smoking women

The major finding from the study are

1. Only (2.2%) of the total deaths reported among the nonsmoking women with no known or minimal exposure to tobacco smoke were due to cancer of any site.
2. ~~No cases of lung cancer deaths were reported for the nonexposed, nonsmoking women, and eight lung cancer deaths were reported among the nonsmoking women who were exposed to passive smoking.~~ Also, for this small group of 179 nonsmoking nonexposed women, there were no reported cases of breast cancer, genitourinary or lymphatic cancer.
3. Employed nonsmoking women experienced proportionately more cancer deaths (34.3%) than both nonexposed (2.2%) and exposed nonemployed wives (18.9%). The combined groups of exposed nonsmoking wives (nonemployed and employed) contracted 25.5% cancer deaths.
4. Age-adjusted data showed similar trends.
5. Cancer death rates for women smokers was 35.5% of the total deaths of women smokers.

Public health officials should consider requiring that the workplace be free from tobacco smoke since these data imply that passive smoking has a very detrimental effect upon nonsmokers. Also, smokers should be made aware of the potential damage they inflict on others in their home as well as the workplace.

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